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Security Information

BACKGROUND

Highlights of the Mossadeq trial

1. Trial opened Sunday November 8 in Hall of Mirrors of small palace at Saltanatabad 10 miles from Tehran. Troops from nearby barracks form heavy guard.
2. Hall seats approximately 150 spectators. Attendance by pass. Mostly newsmen and photographers in seats. American Embassy officers also present.
3. Military court consists of five judges, all generals in the Iranian army. Prosecutor and court-appointed Defense Counsel are also army officers.
4. Seventy-three year old Mossadeq arrived in usual gray pajamas and gray bathrobe. Appeared feeble and sick.

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5. In four days of inconclusive wrangling competency of the court is still being challenged. Court will pass on its own competency after hearing Mossadeq's arguments.
6. Mossadeq is using all his usual oratorical devices, including sarcasm, mock humility, fainting, weeping and, on occasion, now adds profanity. He threatens to boycott the trial, to commit suicide. He calls for heart stimulants which he gulps and demands a special heater to warm his back. He faints and weeps until water flows off his large beak-like nose. But he also delivers hour-long tirades against the court and the British and expounds history in a strange manner.

7. Mossadeq appears on occasion more violent than ever before. He has cursingly dismissed his court-appointed defense counsel whom he called a "shyster" and "traitor." The prosecutor, whose presentation has been labeled "brilliant" by some spectators has also hit back and denounced the ex-premier as an "old hag who shammed illness."
8. Government is permitting uncensored reporting by foreign correspondents. At home, possibly afraid of popular reaction, it is releasing only short summaries on the radio and has clamped sharp censorship on local press to extent of forcing two of largest dailies to delete full pages of texts of Mossadeq's remarks at trial.

9. No indication how long this will go on